



BRIEFING: APRIL 21, 2016 BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM #4

TO: Chairman Richard and Board Members

FROM: Ben Tripousis, Northern California Regional Director

DATE: April 21, 2016

RE: Update on the San Francisco to San Jose Project Section

Background

The San Francisco to San Jose Project Section is part of the first phase of the California High-Speed Rail System connecting the cities of San Francisco, Millbrae (San Francisco Airport) and San Jose on an electrified Caltrain Corridor with proposed station stops at Transbay Transit Center, 4th and King, near the San Francisco Airport (Millbrae) and San Jose.

As required in statute, the approximately 51-mile Project Section is planned to be a blended system which will support a modernized Caltrain service and high-speed rail service primarily on shared track. This approach minimizes impacts on surrounding communities, reduces project cost, improves safety and expedites implementation.

The Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board owns the peninsula rail corridor that extends from the 4th and King Street station in San Francisco to the Tamien station in San Jose, and operates the Caltrain commuter service along this line. In 2012, the Legislature and Authority Board in 2012 directed the development of a “blended” system along the peninsula rail corridor, incorporating commuter and high-speed service largely within the existing right-of-way. This was explained in more detail in the 2012 Business Plan.

In 2012, Senate Bill 1029 was passed by the Legislature defining the blended system and allocating \$600 million to modernize the Caltrain corridor. That same year, the Authority adopted a revised Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board reflecting policies defined in the Authority’s 2012 Business Plan, the 2012 Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) nine-party MOU, and the Early Investment Strategy for a Blended System in the Peninsula Corridor. The revised MOU helped define a new partnership for planning, environmental review, design and construction of a blended system in the peninsula rail corridor.

This is an information item only. Staff work efforts on this section are being presented to the Board for its information, but no Board action is involved at this time.

Discussion

Since 2013, Authority staff has been coordinating planning efforts with Caltrain staff in support of the development of the Caltrain electrification project and the Caltrain Modernization Program. Authority staff is working with Caltrain staff to complete the necessary agreements to fund Caltrain electrification, to facilitate the implementation of blended service in the peninsula corridor, and to develop infrastructure recommendations to support blended operations.

The Authority continues to advance planning, environmental review and preliminary engineering for high-speed rail service in the peninsula rail corridor. In November 2015, HNTB was selected to advance and complete the environmental and engineering work necessary for an environmental document for high-speed rail service the peninsula corridor (which Caltrain environmentally cleared in 2015). System improvements additive to the Caltrain electrification project that will be defined during the planning and environmental review process include passing tracks, that can be used by high-speed rail to pass Caltrain trains that need to stop more frequently, system upgrades to support higher train performance and speed, system safety improvements, including grade crossings, and stations.

We are also continuing our community integration efforts in support of the environmental review process. We are accomplishing this, in part, by utilizing the outreach venues initiated by our Caltrain partners as part of the Caltrain Modernization program, specifically the City/County Staff Coordinating Group (CSCG), and the Local Policy Maker Group (LPMG) as opportunities for regular stakeholder participation and communication. We are also forming Community Working Groups, which will include stakeholders from each city as well as from San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. We are also working to schedule regular updates to local City Councils and Boards of Supervisors throughout the environmental review process.

Safety is a key benefit of the improvements being made on the corridor, both through the Caltrain electrification program and the additional steps (described below) for the blended system. The Authority is committed to improving the safety and security of train service in the Peninsula Corridor. The blended system proposes safety and security elements such as, but not limited to, installation of four-quadrant gates and channelization at each grade crossing between San Francisco and San Jose, as well as the installation of more robust perimeter fencing along the entirety of the corridor to prevent pedestrian access. The Authority will work with the local communities to design, develop and implement these blended system safety improvements.

The development of the environmental document for the San Francisco to San Jose project section will advance in the coming weeks with the initiation of scoping. Currently, the draft of this Project section's environmental document is anticipated for release in early 2017. The release of the draft environmental document will be accompanied by public meetings as well as agency and public comment as required. Throughout this process comments from the public are collected and used, in conjunction with resource agency comments and technical studies, to support the development of the alternatives and ultimately the selection of a preferred alternative.

Next Steps

- Continue working with Caltrain to complete the necessary funding plans and follow-on agreements to fund and complete the electrification of the Peninsula Corridor.
- Initiate scoping for the draft environmental document.
- Engage regulatory agency partners, stakeholders, and the community during the preparation of the technical studies and environmental documentation to support work activities.

Attachments

– San Francisco to San Jose Project Section Map

Exhibit 1. San Francisco to San Jose Project Section Map

